

The ES rep role

The most effective sub-branches have an executive to share the work. The executive positions may include: sub-branch president, sub-branch secretary, sub-branch treasurer, ES rep, women's information network contact and health and safety representative.

The ES rep role supports the sub-branch executive by

- being the voice for all ES members on the sub-branch
- assisting with communication of AEU advice and information to ES staff
- canvassing ES members' views
- supporting ES staff and the AEU rep with ES concerns
- participating in AEU social events
- actively recruiting ES members
- being on the consultative committee (not obligatory, but recommended)
- attending regional meetings to be the voice for ES staff and connect with other ES reps.

Read about the important work our ES reps are doing

Our aim is to explain why it is important to have an ES rep on the subbranch, what the role involves and how enjoyable it can be. These are just a few profiles of some of our dedicated ES Reps, check out our website for more: aeuvic.asn.au/your-job/education-support/es-rep-profiles.



Leanne Holt

HR manager Leanne Holt says one of her biggest wins was working with her principal to get all integration staff onto ongoing contracts.

"It was an amazing moment," she says.

The ES rep and consultative committee member says while much has been achieved, there is still work to be done to ensure all ES staff receive the same benefits as teachers.

"We need to stand tall and stand together and keep fighting for ourselves and each other and be very proud of the work we do."

And her advice to aspiring ES reps? "Just go out there, give it a go, and believe in it."



Janet Durbridge

Janet has been an AEU rep for 12 of the 17 years she has worked in education support to develop children's literacy.

"These kids are our future. I absolutely love working with them."

Janet says one of her favourite memories is the solidarity among AEU members who marched to parliament with a strong message for the Napthine Liberal government.

"There was clapping and cheering and I thought, 'the teachers are clapping us, we are one'. It was wonderful. It was a privilege to be there. I just loved it."

"It's absolutely beneficial to be in the union. Apart from pay rises, you have healthcare, banking, all those extra benefits. Everybody should be in the union. Just go for it."



Vicki Peterson

Vicki Peterson started her career as an integration aide in 2003, but now works as an EAL aide supporting children with oral language and English skills. Vicki is also an ES rep and has recently joined branch council.

"The roles of ES staff have changed a lot in recent years – there's a lot more responsibility, but there hasn't always been an equal amount of recognition," she says.

Vicki says the roles and responsibilities of integration aides in particular have changed over the years. Having this formally recognised is one of Vicki's priorities as an ES rep.

"ES staff are now widely recognised as being very capable," she says. "That is thanks to the work of ES reps."

"But there are more areas we can improve, and that's why I'm here, I want to move ES staff forward a little more."



Kanchanie Jayawardena

Kanchi has been an education support officer (AKA integration aide) at Lakeview Senior College since 2015 working with students on the autism spectrum or with an intellectual disability. As demanding as that

can be, Kanchi says she likes the close bond that forms between aides and students, given the support that aides provide inside and outside of the classroom.

As the ES rep on the consultative committee, she's appreciated being able to bring ES issues to the discussion table.

"In terms of integration aides, I think pay is one of the crucial things. These are staff who go into the classroom and work with the most challenging kids. Knowing the work they do, the commitment they put in, I think it would be rewarding if they could get a bit of a pay rise."



Susan Saunders

Susan began her school career outside the front gate as the crossing attendant. These days she works as education support and is doing the STAR program, alongside first aid management, while also studying to become

a teacher.

She's particularly enjoyed the close relationship aides can build with students, which has strengthened since her school started allowing ES staff to attend PLT meetings.

"We connect with the children, because we have that on-on-one experience with them," Susan says.

She says it has always been a source of comfort to know she has the backing of the union, which is why she's been active in getting other ES staff members to join.

"Because you can talk as a group. It doesn't seem so frightening or scary when you're talking as a group but one person is the representative."



Trisha Bennett

Trisha runs the reading intervention program at Aitken Creek Primary School, and loves working in the school library.

"I love seeing the kids come in and find new books and things that they're wanting

to learn about," Trisha says. "You create a bond with particular children when you're working with them,

whether it's in the classroom, the library or running those small intervention groups."

As ES rep at her school, she often attends regional meetings to keep up-to-date with the latest developments. When convincing ES staff to sign up, she also tends to mention the professional development opportunities membership brings.

"What I've enjoyed most was going to the AEU reps conference last year. I met a lot of powerful people."



Mary Gardner

Mary knows firsthand the wide contribution ES staff make to the life of a school. In her time at Bentleigh Secondary College, she's done some scribing, data entry, helped out with Year 10 work experience, worked as

a classroom aide and now runs the library circulation desk. Oh, and she's also responsible for OHS and First Aid.

"Some ES staff concentrate on one thing or another, but I'm happy to do whatever within the school," Mary says.

One of her most important roles, of course, is being the school's ES rep. She enjoys going to regional meetings and getting an overview of everything that's going on in public education.

She encourages ES staff to put themselves forward as a rep, to ensure ES members have a chance to make themselves heard. "You need to be the ear that listens to the ES staff who don't want to step up and voice their concerns."



Diana Blyton

Library technician Diana made the move from universities to Mt Ridley P-12 College six years ago – and has never regretted it.

"At university, the job was mostly troubleshooting with printers and computers,

whereas here you're doing more hands on work with the students," Diana says.

Working on a P-12 campus has allowed Diana to build lasting relationships with students as they move from learning to read towards tackling VCE.

She's been equally involved with the staff, taking up the role of sub-branch ES rep because she felt ES staff were underrepresented within the school.

"National Support Staff Week is a great focus. We've got a cafe here, so we make sure the ES get a coffee every day and we have a special event. Shining the light on them is always very successful here."